

## **Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations**

### Report to the ACS Board of Directors

The Board Standing Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations (PA&PR) met virtually on August 6, 2015. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Committee members and highlighted several items behind Tab 1 of the agenda book:

- PA&PR Committee Information Sheet
- Message points for communicating with policymakers on ACS top-tier policy priorities
- Chart of major ACS coalitions and partnerships associated with policy statements
- Federal legislation tracking chart
- Snapshot of Governance Advocacy

The Chair provided:

- An update on key legislation - passage of the Senate Every Child Achieves Act which contained ACS policy priorities, Senate committee approval of the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act that addressed two main ACS policy principles, and; an update on the Senate version of the Toxic Substances Control Act which contains sustainable chemistry provisions championed by ACS.
- An update on the status of the Society Program Portfolio Management project and the four programs from the ACS Office of Public Affairs that are among the 13 ACS programs being reviewed.
- Reminder of the August 13 National Historic Chemical Landmark designation ceremony of Edwin Land and Instant Photography at the MIT Museum.

**Approval of Minutes** - The Committee **VOTED** to adopt the minutes of the June 5, 2015 virtual meeting.

### **National Historic Chemical Landmarks Program**

The Chair led the Committee in a discussion about ways to increase geographic diversity of National Historic Chemical Landmarks (NHCL). Dr. William Oliver, Chair of the PA&PR Subcommittee on National Historic Chemical Landmarks participated in the discussion. He and the NHCL subcommittee staff liaison gave an overview of the Landmark selection criteria and current geographic distribution of the approximately 75 destinations. Committee members made several suggestions for increasing geographic diversity that Dr. Oliver and the subcommittee will discuss at a future meeting.

### **ACS Experts Program**

ACS staff presented the Committee with an update on the ACS Experts program that recruits and trains ACS members to be effective media spokespersons and communicators. ACS has trained 41 Experts through two training sessions in 2013 and 2014. ACS Experts agree to a two-year commitment to engaging with a variety of audiences. In a recent survey of the 2013 class, 18 of 20 agreed to “re-up” for another two year commitment and they rated the training 4.6 of 5.0.

ACS Experts Katie Hunt and Frankie Wood-Black joined the Committee discussion and shared with them how the program and training allowed them to be effective communicators. Both shared with the Committee their own personal communications engagement success stories. Committee members were pleased with the program’s accomplishments and effectiveness.

### **Chemistry Ambassadors**

The Committee received several updates from ACS staff under the Chemistry Ambassador umbrella. The first update dealt with the Speaking Simply training provided to ACS members at the national meetings and through other venues. Next, the Committee was informed about a pilot Gamification mobile application that will be launched at the Boston national meeting targeted to students to entice them to earn points, badges and other recognitions for doing outreach and communicating with the public. The last topic covered was the Chemistry Champions contest that will culminate, before a live audience at the Boston national meeting, with the selection of the 2015 Chemistry Champion. The contest is targeted to younger chemists and challenges them to succinctly and compellingly communicate their science to general audiences.

### **RSC Public Attitude to Chemistry Study**

ACS staff presented the highlights of a study conducted by the Royal Society of Chemistry – Public Attitudes to Chemistry. The survey included the general public as well as RSC members. The study found that the public perception of chemistry and chemicals is far more positive than professional chemists believed. Based on survey results, several recommendations were made to enable more effective communications with the public. It was noted during the presentation that many of the recommendations were already in practice at ACS. Committee members expressed interest in an ACS led a complimentary study and staff agreed to investigate the feasibility and cost of such an undertaking and report back to the Committee.

### **National Meeting Press Center**

ACS staff presented media publication statistics resulting from its national meeting press center in Denver. One-hundred percent of the 21 science-based press releases were publicized in the media, with a potential print and online audience of 3.5 billion. Plans for the press center at the Boston national meeting were shared and Committee members were invited visit the press center and to join the live press conferences during the meeting.

### **Adjournment**

There being no old or new business, the Committee adjourned at 1:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. John Adams, Chair